

20 years and the biggest drop in poverty in female-headed households in 30 years. This country is on the right track, and we need to bear down and pursue that course.

And these leaders and their Members have helped us to do that, and for that I am very, very grateful.

Thank you.

Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, in terms of the budget, do you feel like an 800-pound gorilla because Republicans have been seemingly willing to give you much of what you wanted, had no taste for a Government shutdown, a continuing resolution? Could you tell us what your feelings about that are?

The President. Well, I feel good about it, but that is the way that our Government has traditionally worked. We've gotten together, worked together, and made principled compromises, and we did make principled compromises here. And we're continuing to bring the deficit down and work toward a balanced budget. We must do that. I am for that.

And I am very gratified. I think the American people made it quite clear that they do not support the Government-shutdown way of governing America. They want us to work together, and I'm pleased by that.

Q. Are you satisfied with continuing resolutions?

The President. Well, we're still negotiating on that. I hope I will be. I'm satisfied with the process so far, but I haven't seen the product. So let me see the product before I tell you that.

Immigration Legislation

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to sign the congressional immigration report or in the conference report can still changes be made? What's your view?

The President. First of all, I'm gratified that we got the Gallegly amendment out of the immigration bill. I thought that was the right thing to do, certainly the right thing for children. Every law enforcement group in America supported our position. I feel good about it.

I want to withhold further comments on the immigration bill because it is a subject of intense negotiation now and they're working on how it might be resolved in the context of the continuing resolution and moving to get Congress out of town. So I don't want to say anything that will complicate the work that's being done. I hope some progress can be made there.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:14 p.m. at the Longworth House Office Building, following a meeting with Democratic congressional leaders.

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation With Astronaut Shannon Lucid September 26, 1996

The President. Hello.

Ms. Lucid. Hello.

The President. Welcome home.

Ms. Lucid. Why, thank you so much. It's so kind of you to call.

The President. Well, we're all so proud of you. We've been watching you, and I couldn't believe you walked off the shuttle.

Ms. Lucid. Well, I'm just really proud to be an American, and I'm just really proud to be part of this cooperative program that we have going with the Russians. It was just a great mission. And I just had a great time.

The President. Well, it was wonderful. And as I said, the whole country followed you, but

I appreciate what you said about the cooperation with Russia, too. It really sets the stage for the work on the international space station. And it's very, very important. And I believe the way you captured the public imagination will also help us to build long-term support for the space program.

Ms. Lucid. Well, I think so. Of course, I don't know from a political standpoint or from the big boss standpoint, but I just know from the people that are actually working, you know, like the Cosmonauts and the Astronauts working together, that this works out just great. They were just wonderful people to work with.

The President. Yes, they are good people, and we're making real progress in working with them, I think.

Ms. Lucid. I think so. And it couldn't have been a better experience. And I just thoroughly enjoyed working with the Cosmonauts.

The President. The other thing that I wanted to say was that—on behalf of my wife and daughter, is that you have been a terrific inspiration for young women around the country and all around the world. And I know as you get out and around and people get to congratulate you, you'll see that. But it's a wonderful thing for these young girls that may have nontraditional aspirations to see someone like you up there doing that.

Ms. Lucid. Well, thank you, sir. Yes, I just didn't really give a thought to that. It was just something that I'd always wanted to do. And I was just very glad that it worked out.

The President. Did you have a good reunion with your kids?

Ms. Lucid. I sure did. [Laughter] And they're here nagging me already.

The President. Did you get your M&M's I sent you?

Ms. Lucid. Oh, I sure did. I wanted to thank you first thing. That was so nice. They're already into them.

The President. That's good.

Ms. Lucid. That was so nice and so thoughtful of you. I really, really appreciate that.

The President. Thanks. I'm going down to Texas tomorrow, and I just got a note that said you might be there at the time I land in Houston. If so, I hope I get to see you.

Ms. Lucid. Oh, well, that would be very nice. I hope that works out. That would just be great.

The President. Me too. Well, congratulations. I know you want to go back to your family, but I just wanted to say hello. You've given us all a great deal to be proud of and a lot of thrills, and we're glad you're home safe and sound.

Ms. Lucid. Thank you very much, Mr. President. And it was very nice of you to call. I really appreciate that. Thank you so much.

The President. Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Teleconference Remarks to the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers September 26, 1996

Thank you. I want you to save some of that energy for the next 5 weeks and 4 days; we need your help all the way. I thank you for your endorsement. Your support means a great deal to me. As you know, it is crucial to our victory. I wish I could be there with you to thank you in person, but I'm glad to have this opportunity to speak to you by satellite. You're out there in Chicago, a city that has always stood for the strength and drive of our working people, and a city that was awfully good to our Democrats just a couple of weeks ago.

I want to thank my good friend, your president, George Kourpias, for all of his hard work and support. George rode with me on the train to Chicago, and I enjoyed that very much, and I missed him on Labor Day. We usually spend that together, too. I'll see you soon, George.

I also want to thank Don Wharton, your secretary-treasurer, and the entire executive council of the IAM. You're all doing a great job. The International Association of Machinists has been going strong for 108 years now, and I congratulate you on your plans to unify IAM with two other great unions, the United Steel Workers and the United Auto Workers.

By the year 2000 when we start that new century, you will be the largest union in North America. And with leaders like George Kourpias, Steve Yokich, and George Becker, I don't have any doubt at all that soon you'll be the largest in the entire world.

I want to talk to you today for a few minutes about the choice our country is facing in just 40 days, a choice that will determine whether we build a bridge to the future or a bridge to the past, whether we can build a bridge to